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SUBJECT: ITALIANS CAUTIOUS ON UN ENVOY FOR AFGHANISTAN

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Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor David D. Pearce, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary  
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¶1. (C) In bilateral meetings on the fringes of the Rome Afghan conference, Italy's prime minister and foreign minister guardedly welcomed the prospect of a new, high-level UN envoy for Afghanistan. But PM Prodi told USUN Amb Khalilzad it would be important for such an envoy to have adequate resources to do the job. FM D'Alema agreed on the need for greater international cooperation, but said such a person would need to be an international political figure. Separately, Afghan President Karzai told Khalilzad that a high-level envoy could be useful for improving coordination between and among donors, and with the Afghan government, but not as a new high commissioner to be imposed on Kabul. Karzai said sensitive regional issues, like Afghan-Pakistani relations, should be reserved for the highest level, e.g. the UNSYG. Khalilzad also discussed with the Italians the need to revise and strengthen the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq, and suggested they consider possible candidates for such a position.

¶2. (C) The Italian PM and FM discussed Iran with Khalilzad in familiar terms, arguing the need for engagement and saying that the US, not the European, role was key for Tehran. Khalilzad said it was important to be consistent in our collective message on the nuclear issue; otherwise the Iranians would scent division and hold out in the belief they can get a better deal. D'Alema repeated his G-8 message: the current cycle of sanctions and more sanctions on Iran was not working. Boucher said Iran needs to choose between a productive relationship with the rest of the world and nuclear weapons. On Kosovo, the PM said we need to go "in the direction of" independence but use the coming months to make the Serbs feel the prospect of EU membership is real. The FM added that the EU would split over a unilateral declaration now by Kosovo. That said, D'Alema declared that Kosovo independence was the only solution, even for Serbia. He supported the Quint approach, i.e. go for a simple resolution now that would bless an EU troop presence, but leave independence and the recognition issue for later. Outside this process, however, Quint members should agree among themselves that at the end of the designated

negotiating period there would be independence and recognition. End Summary.

#### Cautious on Senior UN Envoy for Afghanistan

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¶3. (C) USUN Amb Khalilzad met July 2 with PM Prodi and FM D'Alema during the Rome conference on the rule of law in Afghanistan. SCA A/S Boucher joined the FM meeting. Prodi noted that civilian casualties in Afghanistan put him under political pressure in Italy. Khalilzad said they caused pressure not only in Italy but in Afghanistan. The Taliban were to blame, but we may also need to consider something like a joint cell with the Afghans on military strategy. D'Alema expressed concern about the intentions of Iran's Revolutionary Guard and whether their activities could portend intent to use the Afghan battlefield for other reasons, e.g. to pressure the USG. Khalilzad commented that the Iranians were capable of doing several different, and apparently contradictory, things at the same time. He stated that it was time to develop a sophisticated approach to counter Iranian strategy, rather than to debate about its nature.

¶4. (C) Khalilzad probed both Italian leaders for their views on the utility of a high-level UN envoy to renew the "Spirit of Bonn" and work both the internal and external aspects of the Afghan issue. The PM questioned whether such an envoy would be given the requisite resources to do the job. If so, he would support it. The FM agreed greater regional cooperation was needed, as well as progress on the political, and not only military, level. That was why he had been advocating an international conference. But D'Alema was cautious about an envoy, saying such a UN envoy would need to be an international political figure. Boucher noted that the

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Afghan government was at the center of the process and any envoy would have to be someone who worked to support Karzai.

¶5. (C) Separately, Khalilzad also raised the UN envoy proposal in discussions with Afghan President Karzai, who was also attending the conference. The Afghan president felt an envoy could be useful, in addition to the current UN envoy. The new envoy's role should be to improve coordination among donors, and between donors and the Afghan government. The JCMB is not working well, in Karzai's view, and better coordination would be helpful. Such a person would need to understand the Afghan situation well and be prepared to work closely with the Afghan government, not be placed in any kind of position over it, e.g. as a high commissioner. The envoy would need to be resident in Kabul to be effective. Karzai felt that discussion of the most sensitive regional issues, like Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, should take place only at the highest level, a role that the UN Secretary General may wish to reserve for himself. (UNSGY Ban Ki-Moon told Khalilzad he had already been discussing with UNAMA head Koenig the idea of a possible role for himself; Koenig reportedly is unenthusiastic about naming a second UN envoy, hQever.)

... and Iraq

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6 (C) Khalilzad observed that the mandate for the UN assistance mission to Iraq, UNAMI, also needed to be renewed and strengthened soon. This was potentially important for national reconciliation efforts in Iraq, e.g. helping to sort out the complex issues related to Kirkuk and the north. He asked the FM if the GOI had any candidates. D'Alema, after consulting briefly with aides, demurred, saying the GOI had experienced people, but no official suggestions at the moment.

#### Iran: What Tehran Wants, Only the US Can Give

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¶17. (C) Both the PM and FM discussed Iran in familiar terms, arguing the need for engagement and saying that the US -- not the European -- role is key. Khalilzad stressed that it was important to be consistent in our collective message; otherwise the Iranians would scent division and hold out in the belief they can get a better deal. D'Alema repeated his G-8 message: Italy would not get out of step with the P5 plus one. It would implement resolutions, and had taken steps against Bank Sepah. But the current cycle of sanctions and more sanctions is not working. We need to revisit the strategy. The Iranians have 3,000 centrifuges working now, and it will be 8,000 by the end of the year.

¶18. (C) Prodi sounded the same theme, arguing the need to stop this process now and get Iran into negotiations. We're locked in the preconditions phase, he said, not getting to negotiations, but time is working in Iran's favor. He and D'Alema both felt a negotiations process would split the Iranians whereas confrontation serves only to unite them. Khalilzad told the PM that the question was whether Iran would stop, even if we engaged them. What level of pressure would be needed to effect adequate controls? And if they truly wanted to engage, would it really be so hard for them, with all their cleverness and subtlety, to find a way to suspend, as we have suggested? We have offered negotiations -- at the level of the Secretary. But our analysts think it is unlikely Tehran will give up its pursuit of a weapon. If not, then we need to consider other options, and those are different judgments. Boucher told D'Alema that Iran needs to choose between a productive relationship with the rest of the world and nuclear weapons.

#### Lebanon: Rollover UNIFIL Mandate

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¶19. (C) The Prime Minister noted Lebanese PM Siniora had visited recently. Siniora preferred to leave the UNIFIL mandate as it was, and do a technical rollover. Khalilzad said the USG supported Siniora. The PM said the Lebanese

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leader was concerned about the porous border with Syria and felt it was critical to get some measure of control.

#### Kosovo: Take More Time, but Independence Inevitable

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¶10. (C) The PM and FM both attached importance to the US-Russia summit in Kennebunkport and its discussions on Kosovo. Prodi said we need to go "in the direction of" independence but use the coming months to make the Serbs feel the prospect of EU membership is for real. The FM said the EU would split over a unilateral declaration by Kosovo. EU countries want a resolution to have a legal basis for action and to keep NATO troops. Italy was not ready to support a unilateral declaration just yet but could be in the future. D'Alema declared that Kosovo independence is the only solution, even for Serbia. He supported the Quint approach, i.e. to go for a simple resolution now that would bless an EU troop presence, but leave the independence and recognition issue for later. Outside this process, however, Quint members would agree among themselves that at the end of the designated negotiating period there would be independence and recognition.

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